

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

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THE INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM:  
THE U.S. ARMY'S PREMIER PHASE IV AND IRREGULAR  
WARFARE FORCE FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

by

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### ***Abstract***

The purpose of this paper, which was prepared using both a present day and historical research methodology, is to propose that the U.S. Army should further its transformation efforts and develop a force specially trained and organized to meet the challenges of irregular warfare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As many irregular warfare conflicts are born during the stabilization phase, or phase IV, of a conventional conflict, this proposed force would also be transformed to operate in that environment as well. Although such a force already exists in the U.S. Army Special Forces, this force is not large enough to succeed in large-scale irregular warfare conflicts, which is currently evident in both Iraq and Afghanistan. An existing Army force, which is large enough, is the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT). The findings from researching this topic were remarkable. In order for a force to succeed in an irregular warfare conflict, the force must be properly organized, possess highly technical skills in various functional areas, and be willing to adopt asymmetrical tactics. The functional areas that were identified as insufficient were: socio-cultural awareness, information operations, civil-military operations, and intelligence. Other areas that were found to be deficient were the Army's methodology in advising host nation armies, and its lack of using asymmetrical tactics. The conclusions of these findings were astonishing. While the Army may appear to be suffering from these deficiencies at the tactical unit levels, in looking at the Army in its entirety, much of the necessary expertise already exist, they are just not properly organized and trained for irregular warfare. This paper recommends the proper organizations and training, and discusses the potential arguments and implications associated with each recommendation.

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## **Introduction**

Many high-ranking politicians, military officers, and scholars believe irregular warfare (IW) will dominate the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “There is a growing realization that the most likely conflicts of the next fifty years will be irregular warfare in an ‘Arc of Instability’ that encompasses much of the greater Middle East and parts of Africa and Central and South Asia.”<sup>1</sup> In trusting that this belief is true, the time has come for the U.S. Army to return to the “transformation table” and develop a force that is trained and organized to win these likely conflicts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since the U.S. is currently at war, and military service does not appear to be on the list of popular employment opportunities for many young Americans, the development of such a force would most likely have to come from an existing Army force. The existing Army force that is best suited for such an endeavor is the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT). The IBCT should be transformed into the U.S. Army’s premier phase IV and irregular warfare force in order to meet the asymmetric threats and tactics the U.S. will likely face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Before justifying why the IBCT should be this force, the modularity pillar of Army transformation must first be discussed.

Under the Army’s transformation plan, which began over a decade ago, one of the most significant changes was the development of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). This organization has three different variations: the Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT), the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), and the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT). The idea behind these three organizations was that a division or corps commander would have the flexibility to pull the proper mix of forces, and deploy anywhere in the world with a modular force that possessed the “right” capabilities for the given terrain, enemy, and mission set, and be able to fight and win.

Simply stated, the IBCT would arrive first because it was small enough to quickly deploy and secure a foothold, then the SBCT would arrive and expand that foothold to make room for the very large and lethal HBCT. Based on different scenarios, this initiative makes sense. However, if our forces will be involved with irregular warfare for the next fifty years, it is only logical that the Army furthers its transformation efforts to field a force that is best suited for it.

The IBCT consists of three types of infantry, airborne, air assault and light. Based on the previous discussion of modularity, the airborne capable IBCT should remain unchanged. It is needed to secure footholds, such as ports and airfields, to employ the SBCT and HBCT. Furthermore, the airborne capable infantry, along with the SBCT and HBCT must continue to be unaffected by transformation because they are the major components to our nation's "insurance policy"<sup>2</sup> against future conventional warfare conflicts. "...Few of our nation's enemies appear eager to challenge our forces on a conventional battlefield."<sup>3</sup> All other types of IBCTs should be transformed into the Army's premier phase IV/IW force. For the purpose of this paper, all further reference to the IBCT only includes the air assault and light infantry, not airborne.

## **Overview**

Just as the Army Combat Operations in Vietnam Study Group examined the Army during the Vietnam War and proposed organizational changes,<sup>4</sup> this paper will examine multiple past and current IW conflicts from multiple Army, joint, coalition and academic perspectives and propose changes to the existing IBCT. Although multiple references will be made to Operation Iraqi Freedom, this transformation of the IBCT into the premier phase IV/IW force is not intended for employment in or to attain victory in the irregular warfare conflict of Iraq. Changes of this magnitude will take much time to implement.

To make this argument for IBCT transformation, a holistic background of supporting arguments for change will first be presented. This will be followed by in-depth discussions of what needs to be changed in the existing IBCT, in order to produce the type of organization needed in the IW conflicts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Finally, this study will conclude with the potential arguments and implications involved with implementing such a transformation.

## **Background**

When the U.S. enters a conflict, it historically has done so conventionally. The reason is easy to understand. The U.S. is extremely good at conventional warfare. As good as the U.S. is at conducting its Jominian concept of war<sup>5</sup> against another conventional opponent; it did realize that this conventional approach to warfare did not work against an unconventional enemy. Thus, the Weinberger-Powell doctrine was adopted in the 1980's<sup>6</sup>. Simply stated, this doctrine set forth the policy that the U.S. would not engage in IW and that it would only conduct conventional warfare, where its high-technology weaponry and overwhelming firepower would defeat any opposing state with an organized conventional military.<sup>7</sup> Operation Desert Storm (ODS) further supported this policy, where a coalition led by the U.S. expelled the largely conventional Iraqi forces from the country of Kuwait with little difficulty.

After ODS, the U.S. Army continued its conventional mindset for the next twenty-plus years. However, the events of 9/11 forced the Army to fight an enemy that was far from the norm of employing conventional warfare, the international terrorist. After temporarily defeating the terrorists in Afghanistan and removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power in Iraq, the Army found itself in the type of war that had been avoided at all costs by the U.S. government for many years, irregular warfare.



Although the Army has made tremendous strides to change its organization to be more effective with IW, those changes have centered principally around three main concepts: doctrine, technology, and adaptability. The most recent doctrine developed for IW is the joint Army/Marine Corps manual titled Counterinsurgency. This manual, which will be referenced throughout this paper, is an excellent source of knowledge for ground forces. However, as interesting or beneficial it may be, one must not forget that very few Soldiers and Marines actually read manuals outside the school environment. During the Cold War, one Russian solidified this claim when he said, “one of the serious problems in planning against American doctrine is that the Americans do not read their manuals, nor do they feel any obligation to follow their doctrine.”<sup>8</sup> Technological advances enjoy a bit more popularity among the troops.

As most would agree, the young men and women who serve in the military today are very well versed with technology. They look at computer games and the internet as essential for a solid quality of life. This contrasts with how their parents look at the same technology as expensive gadgets. Regardless, the technological advances for IW have been successful and although interesting, due to their classified nature and the fact that the U.S. military is often accused of over trusting technology and underestimating the human factor,<sup>9</sup> IW technological advances will not be discussed in this venture. So if few are reading the doctrine, technology is dismissing the human factor, and conventional tactics are not working in IW, what does the Army trust in to counter the rigors of this type of warfare? The answer is one word, adaptability.

If you were to talk with any combat arms school commandant in the Army or Marine Corps today, and asked them what trait they are most trying to instill in their students, the answer would undoubtedly be adaptability. Today’s military must be adaptive because they do not possess the right organization to fight IW. An excellent example of adaptability was illustrated

by one of the Army's premier scholar-soldiers, COL H.R. McMaster. His "approach in preparing his 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR for an upcoming Iraq tour was that of a football coach who knew he had a bunch of able and dedicated athletes, but that he needed to retrain them to play soccer."<sup>10</sup>

Although troops and leaders must be adaptive in any type of warfare, the demands of adapting an Army to defeat an insurgency in IW with a force that is organized and trained to fight a conventional war,<sup>11</sup> is an excruciatingly difficult task and requires a special type of leader. However chock-full of great leaders the Army may be, few possess the intellectual background and education needed to succeed in IW. The time has come to develop a force that relies on its training and organization, not adaptability, to win during IW conflicts.

In order to understand the arguments and discussions forthcoming, comprehension of the underlying vision of this new IBCT concept is required. The vision of this new IBCT is not complex. When the Army is called upon to conduct conventional warfare, it will do so with its Airborne, Stryker, and Heavy BCTs. However, after they have seized a populated area, they will pass phase IV responsibility to the IBCT. Many irregular warfare conflicts are born during the stabilization phase, or phase IV, of a conventional conflict. Some common phase IV responsibilities, often referred to as stability and/or reconstruction, include, "performing limited local governance, providing or assisting in the provision of basic services to the population, and ensuring the threat is reduced to a manageable level that can be controlled by the host nation."<sup>12</sup> This battle hand over will allow the conventional forces to continue the fight elsewhere and enable the IBCT to begin the large number of tasks associated with stability and reconstruction (S&R).<sup>13</sup> When the Army is deployed to conduct IW, a mission historically executed by special operations forces (SOF), the IBCT will be prepared to assist as necessary with the training and organization conducive for such conflicts. This latter arrangement will additionally hold the

Army's conventional forces, such as the Airborne, Stryker, and Heavy BCTs, in reserve, prepared to deploy elsewhere in the world to protect and advance U.S. national interests.

## **Socio-cultural Awareness**

Many believe that IW, specifically in the counterinsurgency (COIN) environment, is either won or lost by focusing on the population. Supporting this notion, the first new requirement for the IBCT is the formation of the Socio-cultural Awareness Cell. Much like any other functional cell within an infantry organization, such as intelligence or operations, this new cell's responsibility would be two-fold. First, it would be responsible for developing and overseeing the socio-culture training plan for the IBCT. This plan would initially be very generic, focusing on the intricacies of understanding any given population. As the unit grasped this initial concept, it would move forward on studying the specific socio-cultural factors of a potential country or region the unit may deploy. These factors include: society, social structure, culture, language, power and authority, and interests.<sup>14</sup>

When deployed in support of IW, the cell would advance its understanding of the population and develop operations that would capitalize on that knowledge. Moreover, it would have the responsibility of ensuring that all members of the IBCT, to include the commander, understood the third and fourth order effects every operation would have on the host nation's population. Since the Army's new COIN manual encompasses this understanding of a country's or region's population as an intelligence cell responsibility, the IBCT must have its own staff organization dedicated to its study.

Since "intelligence in COIN is about people,"<sup>15</sup> the S2 shop is entirely too busy deciphering the intelligence picture and does not physically have the time to take on the

additional duty of ensuring the entire IBCT is trained in socio-cultural awareness. Given that the socio-culture factors of a population often drive their perceptions, which in turn drive their actions, everyone in the IBCT must have a sincere appreciation of a population's socio-culture.

General David H. Petraeus, the current commander of all forces in Iraq embraces this last point. While serving as the commander for Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, then Lieutenant General Petraeus made the observation that "every Army of liberation has a half-life beyond which it turns into an Army of occupation...this half-life is tied to the perceptions of the populace about the impact of the liberating force's activities."<sup>16</sup> Bearing this observation in mind, every member of a military organization conducting operations in a COIN environment must understand how their actions will be perceived by any given population. Without this understanding, the potential of extending this "half-life" is virtually impossible. Expanding on one of the critical factors previously mentioned in understanding a population is the comprehension of the population's language.

Whether language doctrinally falls under culture or is equal in the large scheme of socio-cultural factors, improved cultural awareness to the U.S. military means learning a new language. This is evident at any service command and staff college where a common scene is that of a major sitting in front of computer screen with headphones on conducting a Rosetta Stone internet based language tutorial. Throughout the Army, it is often preached to fight the enemy, not your plan, and know your enemies. Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and author Ralph Peters said it best when he claimed that "if there is any single factor our military service neglects...it's the command of foreign languages. How can we 'know our enemies' if we don't know what they're saying?"<sup>17</sup> This major deficiency must be remedied and requiring majors at school and offering it to Soldiers online is not the answer. As part of the socio-cultural cell

peace-time responsibilities, language training is an imperative. Whether each IBCT in the Army is assigned a specific region to specialize, much like SOF, or a certain number of soldiers in each IBCT study multiple languages, this cell would ensure training was conducted, evaluated and assessed.

In order to succeed in any given population, the Army must develop a cell within the IBCT whose sole purpose in life is to quell “the existence of deep cultural misunderstandings.”<sup>18</sup> With a senior cell at the IBCT level, junior cells at the battalion levels, and POLADs (political-cultural advisors)<sup>19</sup> at the company and platoon levels, all focusing on their two fold responsibilities, success with the population during IW would definitely be improved.

## **Information Operations**

Where the Socio-culture Awareness cell must be organized from scratch for the IBCT, the Information Operations (IO) cell already exists. However, the IO cell is a two-man organization consisting of an officer and noncommissioned officer, with no IO capabilities at the battalion level and below. As discussed in the previous section, success in IW hinges on the liberating force’s success with the population. After that force has the necessary knowledge to understand the population and the enemy it is facing, the next step is to communicate with each of them. IO are critical in this endeavor. Furthermore, IO are critical in keeping the population of the liberating force’s country informed as well. Throughout this section, a series of arguments will be presented that will illustrate why the IBCT and its subordinate organizations clearly require more than a two-man IO cell to effectively obtain their desired effects with its IO.

When a liberating force engages in IW, where a substantial civilian population is present, it is imperative that IO are conducted with everything they do. On the large scale, IO can help

explain to the population what they can do to assist their government and encourage participation in the political process.<sup>20</sup> These operations are usually part of a larger information campaign that are often conducted through television, radio, and newspapers, to name a few. Although these campaigns are typically devised and implemented above the IBCT level, the IBCT's knowledge and support of the campaign is pivotal to its success. This type of larger campaign also indirectly provides guidance and direction for IO at the tactical level.

At the tactical level, as in an IBCT's area of operations (AO), an overarching consistent information campaign should be implemented. This campaign not only sets forth themes to follow in individual IO, it also provides a "fall back" plan to implement where an information operation has not been planned. For example, when engaged in offensive operations, an information operation can be used to provide early warning of upcoming civil-military operations, such as running medical clinics and supporting schools. In doing this, extreme caution should be used in targeting the right members of the population, to ensure the enemy is not alerted; unless that is one of the objectives of the operation. During on-going combat operations, IO can be used to keep the population out of harms way. After operations, IO can be used to show the positive results that the military forces are making progress with the population's support. IO should also be used in communicating with the enemy, or potential future enemies.

This communication is first done indirectly. When conducting IO focused on gaining and maintaining the majority of the population's support, it is only logical to assume that some enemy personnel will also be affected. If these enemy personnel are continually reminded that the military force is there to improve their lives and the lives of their family and friends, and they see positive results, some of the "fence-sitters" may fall over to the pro-government side. For

those that have already committed themselves to fight the military force, direct IO should be conducted. These information operations would aim at convincing the enemy that “they can best meet their personal interests and avoid the risk of imprisonment or death by reintegrating themselves into the population through amnesty, rehabilitation, or by simply not fighting.”<sup>21</sup> Another tactic that can be employed against those fighters is to use those who have been captured or have surrendered. Although there are certainly information operation techniques to use in exploiting these captured and surrendered personnel, such as speeches in support of the military force or government over loudspeakers or newspapers, these steps should be thoroughly reviewed by legal personnel before being implemented.<sup>22</sup> These legal reviews help prevent violations against the Geneva Convention and Law of Land Warfare. As critical as IO focused at the population and enemy are, they are equally important on the liberator’s home front.

As demonstrated thus far, to be successful in an irregular warfare conflict, U.S. forces must use multiple independent and intertwined elements. Because of its complexity, IW conflicts tend to last many years; it took the British ten years to win the IW conflict in Malaya.<sup>23</sup> In order for a military force to stay committed long enough in a given IW conflict to win, its own population must continue support the cause. Although maintaining this support clearly falls on the shoulders of those in the government that sent the liberating force, today’s media capabilities allow anyone with a mouth to contribute. In recognizing the media as a key player in maintaining the support of the liberator’s population, Army leaders can take two different stances. They can despise them, as illustrated by a retired Army officer, “Our armed forces will never again face a single opponent on any battleground. We will always be confronted with a third “combatant” at whom we can’t return fire: the media.”<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, they can embrace them.

On today's battlefield, whether irregular or conventional, the media will be there reporting to the world. As unfortunate as it is, death and destruction sells to the public. Because of this, media is the perfect conduit of information for insurgents and terrorists. At the IBCT level, in order to assist the fight to maintain support on the home front, they must take this conduit away from the enemy. This can be done by including the media in everything the IBCT executes. Since the media is going to be there regardless, it only makes sense to involve them early on, and use them as part of an IO. The same holds true for the media of the HN.

With all these arguments said, it should be plainly apparent that a two-man IO cell at only the IBCT is absurd. Perhaps a model from a BCT that served in Iraq could be adopted. One BCT, realizing that two personnel in the IO cell was not enough "to plan, coordinate, and control IO, built an IO working group (IOWG) out of hide...consisting of: PSYOPs and CA attachments, one intelligence officer serving as the public affairs officer (PAO), an engineer and fire support officer (FSO)."<sup>25</sup> Regardless of how it would be organized, the fact is clear, IO are needed to win during IW conflicts, and the IO cell in this new IBCT structure would definitely need to be changed for it to be successful. Civil affairs (CA) in the IBCT faces a similar challenge.

## **Civil-military Operations**

Warfare in a COIN environment is unique. In such an environment, it is not out of the ordinary to win multiple tactical engagements in a specified area just to realize that the number of enemy personnel has actually increased. As the commander of the conventional forces realizes the increase of enemy personnel, he once again orders the conventional attack to destroy the enemy again. David Galula, a renowned COIN author refers to this dilemma as the



“Sisyphean trap”, where a man who was punished and ordered by the Greek gods to roll a rock up a mountain, only to have it roll back down once it reached the top, where he would have to roll it back up again and again.<sup>26</sup> As discussed in the previous section, military organizations must consider the effects that all operations will have on the local population. If nothing but kinetic operations occurs, the chances of civilian casualties and collateral damage increase. Ultimately, this turns the local population against the military force. One way of showing a population that the military is interested in improving their lives and not ruining their lives is to conduct civil-military operations (CMO).

The majority of civil affairs (CA) personnel reside in the U.S. Army Reserve, not in the BCTs. Currently, the IBCT is only authorized a CA officer and noncommissioned officer, with no CA personnel authorized at the battalion level and below.<sup>27</sup> This CA cell is a welcome addition to the BCT, however, they are entirely too small of an entity to take on major reconstruction and nation-building efforts on their own; in such operations, everyone in the BCT must be involved.<sup>28</sup> Some BCT commanders understand this; others do not. One senior Coalition officer in Iraq noted that, “too much of the force remained conceptually in warfighting mode in the post combat phase, and failed to understand that every soldier becomes a CIMIC (civil-military cooperation) operator in COIN and S&R operations.”<sup>29</sup>

Instead of changing the mindset of those commanders that do not understand the importance of CMO, another option is to relieve those other BCT commanders of that responsibility and squarely place it on the responsibility of the IBCT commander. In doing this, HBCTs and SBCTs would lose their CA cells, and IBCTs would gain them, allowing the IBCTs to organize robust CA cells not only at the IBCT level, but also down in the battalions. These cells would possess the necessary expertise in knowing the resources and work force (military,

interagency, non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and host-nation [HN]), required to execute CMO. With the formation of such a cell, caution must be used to avoid placing the entire CMO responsibility on the shoulders of this the staff cell alone. After all, “CMO are green-tab issues...the commander responsible for the security of a specific area must also be able to determine reconstruction priorities and control assets responsible for their implementation.”<sup>30</sup>

Although developing a permanent staff cell in the IBCT for CMO is a necessary first step for CMO to be successful, two additional elements are required. The first is an organization on the ground that puts the CMO into action. The second is economic support. In going back in history to determine if such an “on the ground” organization ever existed successfully, one does not need to go too far back in time. Called by some as “the most remarkable example of American institutional innovation during the Vietnam War,”<sup>31</sup> the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program is certainly an excellent example to examine in finding the type of “on the ground” organization that can facilitate CMO.

Although CORDS in Vietnam was a Corps-level organization, and certainly conducted far more different types of operations than CMO, its past operations can still provide excellent insight into the requirements needed in an IBCT’s AO. “The ‘cutting edge’ of CORDS was unified civil-military advisory teams in all 250 districts and forty-five provinces (of Vietnam)...integrating civilian and military approaches to problem recognition and solution.”<sup>32</sup> The lesson to be taken from CORDS is that the U.S. military, U.S. governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies, and the HN must have unity of effort and command in order for CMO to work. Furthermore, any organization that contained each of these entities must be well dispersed across the IBCT’s entire AO. Perhaps the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model currently employed in Afghanistan and Iraq is the right organization.

Despite any new staff at the BCT or battalion level, or PRTs in every major tribal area, CMO is not possible without funding.

One program currently being employed in Iraq that is providing commanders the necessary funding to execute CMO is the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP). Just as General Petraeus says, in a COIN environment, "money is ammunition."<sup>33</sup> The examples of what a properly orchestrated CMO with the right amount of funding is amazing:

*Projects funded by CERP in our area included refurbishment of Mosul University, repairs to the Justice Center, numerous road projects, countless water projects, refurbishment of cement and asphalt factories, repair of a massive irrigation system, support for local elections, digging of dozens of wells, repair of police stations, repair of an oil refinery, purchase of uniforms and equipment for Iraqi forces, construction of small Iraqi Army training and operating bases, repairs to parks and swimming pools, support for youth soccer teams, creation of employment programs, refurbishment of medical facilities, creation of a central Iraqi detention facility, establishment of a small business loan program, and countless other small initiatives that made big differences in the lives of the Iraqis we were trying to help.*<sup>34</sup>

-Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, Military Review, February 2006

Many of the examples listed above point to a line of operation MG Peter W. Chiarelli focused his 1<sup>st</sup> Calvary Division on during operations in Iraq, "economic pluralism." Simply stated, economic pluralism is setting the conditions for economic growth within a given population. "We created 'economic incubators' in each neighborhood, with heavy investment in goods and services where we helped provide the physical space, funding, and education on how to create a business plan."<sup>35</sup> Although the past two examples are from the division level, the same concepts can certainly be applied to the IBCT. If all commanders were as intellectually gifted in the art of command specific to irregular warfare as Petraeus and Chiarelli are, the formation of the new IBCT would not be necessary. However, the last four years in Iraq has proven that these types of leaders in the Army are very rare.

The challenges discussed in the past three sections, however discouraging, are understandable. Each of the areas are relatively new to the post-Cold War Army, at least from a formalized organizational structure standpoint. However, one area which is not new, and is also suffering in IW is the functional area of intelligence.

## **Intelligence**

The Army has always relied on intelligence to drive its operations. Interestingly enough, the Army has also always been complaining about intelligence inaccuracies. Like the rest of the Army, the intelligence community has struggled to switch gears from conventional to irregular warfare. The amazing technological advances in intelligence gathering used during the Cold War are just not effective with the enemy present in IW. Although this community initially “trusted technology and slighted the human factor,”<sup>36</sup> with today’s IW conflicts, they are now adapting and appear to be headed in the right direction. What is enabling them to adapt, specifically at the IBCT level, are the intelligence additions from Army transformation.

The IBCT is authorized a rather robust intelligence organization. In the IBCT intelligence section, there are twenty trained personnel, to include two human intelligence (HUMINT) collectors. In the IBCT’s Military Intelligence Company (MICO), there is an abundance of trained intelligence personnel, ranging from expertise in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to signal intelligence (SIGINT), to include sixteen personnel trained in HUMINT.<sup>37</sup> With so many intelligence-trained personnel, why are they continuing to struggle in finding the enemy in IW conflicts? Quite conceivably, it might be because intelligence gathering in IW, especially in a COIN environment, is just an extremely difficult task to accomplish. It may also be because all of the assets are at IBCT level and above and not down in the battalions and below.

In the IBCT infantry battalion, there are eight intelligence personnel, not including the sixteen-man recon platoon. In the IBCT recon battalion there are ten intelligence personnel. Neither type of battalion is equipped with HUMINT capabilities. This same capability is one that the entire spectrum of those involved with IW, from experts in academia to company commanders on the ground, claim is one of the major keys to success. Since “the preponderance of HUMINT comes from the units who have the most familiarity and contact with the population,”<sup>38</sup> it would only make sense that those personnel trained in HUMINT collection and analysis would reside in battalions and below. Regardless of how much sense it makes, there are convincing arguments of why they are not below the IBCT level.

As important as HUMINT is in IW, it is only one of many intelligence disciplines used in gathering information about and finding the enemy. Other disciplines include counter-intelligence, signals intelligence (SIGINT), open-source intelligence (OSINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT), technical intelligence, measurement and signatures intelligence (MASINT) and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT).<sup>39</sup> As each of these disciplines support each other in developing the complete enemy picture, to separate one from the other would detract from piecing the entire enemy picture together. The intelligence community’s answer to this challenge is the every soldier is a sensor (ES2) program.

ES2 is a very elementary program that directs that every Soldier on the ground should be aware of his surroundings and should report every oddity up his chain of command. Furthermore, ES2 establishes the requirement that all tactical units should devise a standard reporting system to obtain the intelligence it receives from Soldiers, analyze it, and act on or continue to pass up the chain. To the individual that knows nothing about HUMINT, ES2 makes sense. To those that do understand that HUMINT is much more than reporting out of the

ordinary situations or small segments of information passed on by the local population, ES2 is completely inadequate.

As awesome as the Army Soldier is, he does not possess the training to effectively gather HUMINT. For those that naturally have this ability without formal training, they still lack the ability or authority to offer incentives or protection to those members of the population that are willing to provide intelligence.<sup>40</sup> Since it is unlikely that the HUMINT collectors and analyzers from the MICO would be reassigned to the infantry battalion, this capability must come from within the battalion. The perfect place to “steal from Peter to pay Paul” is the battalion’s recon platoon.

The recon platoon, previously employed conventionally as early warning in the defense or observation forward in the offense, exists to confirm or deny the commander’s priority intelligence requirements (PIR) and gather intelligence. With this as their primary responsibility, it is rational that in IW, they would be the primary collectors of HUMINT. In order to conduct such a transformation, a rigorous training and sustainment program needs to be implemented. As the IBCT transforms into the premier phase IV/IW force, this change would be necessary. The same sort of change is also necessary with the IBCT’s recon battalion.

If the new IBCT’s primary mission is phase IV and IW, having an entire battalion equipped for long range reconnaissance and surveillance is a waste of both manpower and equipment. For this reason, the recon battalion should either be re-trained and equipped to gather intelligence in the asymmetric/irregular environment or just be transformed back into another infantry battalion. After all, in most instances, that is how they are being employed today in Iraq, as an infantry battalion. As one leading IW strategist said, “the most successful battalion commander in Iraq

was successful because he hand picked forty infantrymen to serve in his intelligence section; intelligence is just that important in the COIN environment.”<sup>41</sup>

As important as intelligence is in IW, it is worth nothing unless it is acted on. In order to effectively act on intelligence, and kill or capture the remaining enemy elements, the IBCT must retain its warfighting capability. However, this capability must be harnessed and instilled in yet another new capability, embedding IBCT forces into the host nation (HN) armies to advise and support.

## **Advising/Supporting Host-Nation Armies**

In order to win in IW, the U.S. military must be able “to work with and through partners, to operate clandestinely and to sustain a persistent but low visibility presence.”<sup>42</sup> Throughout the world, during multiple times in history, SOF has successfully brought this concept to life. However, as many leading IW strategists predict that IW conflicts will dominate the U.S. military’s role around the world for many years to come, it is not feasible that SOF could sustain such operations without assistance from conventional forces. As proposed earlier, the transformed IBCT would once again be an excellent choice of unit to fill this necessary void.

Two different types of IW scenarios involving the IBCT must first be discussed. The first scenario of an IW conflict would be similar to present day Iraq. Though, one important prerequisite must first be met. The HN unit that would partner with an IBCT must already be trained for IW conflicts prior to its commitment in an AO. When engaged in an IW conflict, in a country the size of Iraq, both in population and geography, where conventional combat operations preceded, it is not realistic to believe that any unit is capable of training a HN army while conducting operations in a COIN environment. Training an Army is a very complex task

that should only be conducted by a specially trained organization, outside of a hostile area, not on-the-job. Once the HN unit is trained, it would then move to collaborate with an IBCT in conducting IW operations. The way in which this collaboration or partnership would take place applies to both types of scenarios, therefore will be discussed later in this section. The next scenario is comparable to the IW conflicts conducted during the Vietnam War.

In the beginning of the Vietnam War, U.S. Army advisors were imbedded in the already established HN Army to assist those units in developing plans, coordinating actions, and most importantly, employing U.S. air power against the communist North Vietnamese Army and its asymmetrical insurgent partner, the Viet Cong. During this IW conflict, it was found that the number of advisors were too small and U.S. conventional forces were ultimately required to engage in combat operations. In order to prevent this lesson from being re-learned in the future, and once again completely relying on SOF and individual conventional augmenters, the IBCT, with its improved capabilities should be given this task.

Regardless of the type of scenario in which the IBCT found itself, it would employ the same advisory role technique. There are two components to this technique: forces and support. The first component, forces, would follow the general organizational structure of the Combined Action Platoon, created by Major General Lew Walt, the commander of the III Marine Amphibious Force, where he embedded Marine rifle squads into the Vietnamese platoons, where they lived together among the population and focused on pacification.<sup>43</sup> In utilizing this technique, the IBCT would employ an entire U.S. infantry battalion to this advisor mission. The mission requirements would dictate the size of the force imbedded in the HN brigade. Initially, the U.S. force would likely be larger, such as the entire battalion embedded in an HN brigade operation, but as the HN army improves and becomes more competent, the size of the U.S. force



will decrease. Although the sizes of the embedded force will vary, the units will not. For example, if a HN brigade has three battalions, each battalion will always have the same U.S. company in support, and so on down to the squad level. The second component of support is equally important.

In order to provide the HN army the necessary support to conduct effective operations in an IW conflict, the organization assigned to provide such support must have the capabilities itself. Just as the Iraq Study Group concluded that “another mission of the U.S. military would be to assist Iraqi deployed brigades with intelligence, transportation, air support, and logistics support, as well as providing some key equipment,”<sup>44</sup> this technique must be able to do the same. Infantry battalions are the lowest level where such capabilities internally exist, which further supports the rationale of why an entire battalion must be assigned the advisor mission. Although the sizes of the forces imbedded in the HN brigade will vary, the support they receive from the U.S. infantry battalion headquarters will not. This support will include combat support from the specialty platoons, such as the Mortar and Medical platoons, and staff advisement in critical areas, such as intelligence and logistics.

Although joint HN/U.S. operations are being conducted today in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are few U.S. forces imbedded with the HN armies. Typically, an eleven-man U.S. Military Transition Team (MiTT) is assigned to a HN battalion for both training and advising purposes. This arrangement does not facilitate the goal of a partnership developed to advise and support a HN army. Advising and supporting the HN army is imperative to success in IW conflicts and is a logical task for an organization specifically designed for phase IV/IW operations. Although employing this advisor/support technique at the battalion level and below is a bit asymmetrical for a conventional army combat arms force, it may open the door for other asymmetrical

techniques to be employed in future IW conflicts. The next section will discuss some of these techniques for consideration.

## **Asymmetrical Tactics**

Asymmetrical tactics are very effective when employed against a conventionally trained and organized force. This was evident as early as the American Revolution. On the conventional battlefield, the U.S. Continental Army was no match for the British Red Coats. However, only after the U.S. employed an irregular force of militia that would only engage the British using asymmetrical tactics, along with its conventional army, was the U.S. able to win its independence. Since the U.S. won the Revolutionary War by employing asymmetrical tactics from an irregular militia force, or as some would call an insurgency, it is only logical that it would be willing to once again employ similar tactics.

When developing asymmetrical tactics, the different options to explore are endless. However, when coupled with the extreme changes already recommended in this paper, it is better to limit this discussion to a select few. In keeping with the British theme, the asymmetrical tactics the British employed during its IW conflict against communist insurgents in Malaya is an excellent place in history to begin. Although there are multiple examples to choose from, during the Malayan Emergency, the British employed two specific tactics that could easily be accepted, and adopted by the IBCT. The final tactic, although most likely employed in the past as well, comes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The first tactic is best described as bribery, but more politically correct if referred to as enticement. During the Malayan Emergency, the British made it known to the insurgents that bounties would be paid to them, if they were willing to surrender, and provide intelligence on

other insurgents.<sup>45</sup> This tactic worked superbly for the British, and would most likely prove to be beneficial to IBCT as well. In employing this tactic, the IBCT would first need to understand what type of enticement would be most intriguing to the IW threat. In many cases, it may be money, but could possibly be land, employment, or even extradition of a family member. Regardless of the enticement, the IBCT would further need the authority to make such offers. If selectively employed, and monitored stringently, this tactic could reap much success, with little risk involved. Another such tactic that would involve little risk is joint operations with HN police forces.

Again, during the Malayan Emergency, the British realized that to capitalize quickly on the intelligence gained from the surrendered insurgents, it needed to work closely with the HN police and civil authorities. This new tactic of coordinating its efforts and integrating “Army and Police together as a single anti-Bandit force”<sup>46</sup> proved very effective and should be considered by the IBCT. As most police forces are trained in working with informants, and know an AO better than anyone, it is only practical that their expertise be utilized. The final tactic is unlike those previously discussed.

As stated throughout this paper, success in an IW conflict is very contingent upon the local population. An IBCT’s treatment of the population can produce both enemies and allies, depending on how that treatment is perceived. This statement also holds true with the treatment of detainees. No commander understood this concept better than McMaster did. Not only did McMaster train his 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR to treat detainees with dignity and respect, he further implemented programs to ensure that the detainees themselves thought they were be treated well.

One such program was the polling of detainees on their treatment.<sup>47</sup> This program not only ensured that there were no lapses in leadership, such as in Abu Ghraib; it also sent the

message to the detainees that the military force sincerely cared how they were being perceived. A well-treated detainee holds much greater potential in sharing intelligence, and possibly encouraging other insurgents that may be displeased with their leadership to switch sides. Another benefit is the one gained through the family members of the detainees. If family members are reassured that their detainee family members are being treated well, their cooperation might be more easily obtained. The final reason detainees must be treated well was best said by the Washington Post reporter, Thomas Ricks, “One of the keys to winning a counterinsurgency is to treat prisoners well, because today’s captive, if persuaded to enter politics, may become tomorrow’s mayor or city council member.”<sup>48</sup> Although the least asymmetrical of three tactics discussed, it may be the easiest to implement. As every operation in an IW conflict must consider the third and fourth order effects, considering the effects and implementing measures to positively use detainee operations is certainly asymmetrical.

## **Conclusion**

Transforming the IBCT into the premier phase IV/IW force for the U.S. Army would involve multiple implications. After all, “changing an army is an extraordinarily challenging undertaking.”<sup>49</sup> Despite these implications and challenges, the opposite approach of doing nothing and pinning hopes on adaptability is unacceptable. The Army must be an “engine for change”<sup>50</sup> if its goal is to transform into a force that is capable of meeting the irregular threats of the future. In order to address fully the recommended changes and additions put forth for the IBCT, a thorough discussion of the potential arguments against them must also be addressed. Possibly the most contentious recommendations are those related to socio-cultural awareness.

In reviewing the responsibilities of the proposed IBCT socio-cultural awareness cell, it is virtually impossible not to think of the unique capabilities within the Special Forces (SF) branch. One SF veteran wrote to a friend in 2004, “Every day the big Army tries to get more operational control over the only force trained and ready for the FID (Foreign Internal Defense) mission needed here (in Iraq)—SF.”<sup>51</sup> It is difficult to dispute that SF is the best-trained force for irregular warfare. Many years of specialized training in many of the earlier mentioned socio-cultural factors, such as language and culture, are spent in developing the SF Soldier. With this said, a counter-argument to developing this capability within the IBCT is simply that the Army already has this capability inside of its formation, specifically with SF.

This counter-argument is correct, and in most low intensity conflicts, there are enough Special Forces to effectively employ this socio-cultural capability during irregular warfare and be successful. However, as shown in Iraq today, when irregular warfare follows conventional warfare in a heavily populated and large country, there is clearly not enough SF for the job. This is especially true when taking into account the multiple other specialized missions that SF are being called upon to execute, such as special reconnaissance and counter-terrorism. As long as conventional forces are going to be required to interact with populations during phase IV and irregular warfare operations, this socio-cultural capability must also be extended to them. Instead of extending it broadly and haphazardly across the entire conventional Army, it should be narrowly focused to one formation, the IBCT. The same could be said with the proposed changes to the IBCT’s IO, CMO, and intelligence capabilities.

The ultimate proposal for these three areas centered on the fact that more of these types of trained personnel are required to effectively conduct IW operations in populated areas. The argument against this recommendation is that it takes entirely too long to develop a Soldier to be

technically and tactically proficient in IO, CMO, and HUMINT. The counter-argument to this is simple. Just because something is difficult to attain or may take a long amount of time to implement, does not justify not doing anything at all. As many believe that the U.S. will be engaged in the GWOT, or “the long war” for many years to come, the U.S. has plenty of time to recruit, train, and implement the necessary personnel to improve its IO, CMO, and HUMINT capabilities; and too once again narrow its scope, these personnel should be mainly assigned to the IBCT. The final argument that would be brought against this transformed IBCT are some of the proposed asymmetrical tactics that are being recommended.

The first asymmetrical tactic discussed was to bribe or entice the enemy to surrender or provide intelligence. The argument against this tactic is that it has been a long-standing policy of the U.S. not to negotiate with terrorists. As many insurgents or irregular enemies often employ terrorist types of tactics during irregular warfare, thus making them terrorists, such a policy prevents most negotiations with the enemy altogether. When engaging in irregular warfare, especially in a COIN environment, speed is of the essence. As mentioned earlier in the socio-cultural awareness section, a liberating force has a half-life before it becomes a force of occupation. In order to extend that half-life, operations against the enemy must also produce immediate results. The sole benefit of extending the half-life of the liberating force is reason enough to employ the tactic of enticement. In addition, limiting it only to the IBCT while it roots out final remnants of the irregular threat would ensure that use of this tactic was controlled and employed properly.

Whether preceded by conventional warfare or not, irregular warfare will certainly dominate the employment of the U.S. Army for many years to come. However, to discount completely the potential symmetric/conventional threats that also face the U.S., such as North Korea and China,

would be a mistake. As the U.S. is unarguably prepared to meet its potential conventional threats, it is equally unprepared to meet its unconventional or irregular threats of the future. The solution to this delicate challenge is to transform only a part of the Army's formation to be specially trained and organized for this later type of enemy and warfare. The IBCT should be transformed into the U.S. Army's premier phase IV and irregular warfare force in order to meet the asymmetric threats and tactics the U.S. will likely face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In implementing such a transformational change, the Army is guaranteed to be prepared for all potential adversaries.

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